

Getting here

By bus

There is no dedicated coach park for the museum; the nearest drop-off point is on the Lawnmarket just behind the museum. It is the designated drop off point for tours. Once safely off the bus, the museum is signposted through Lady Stair's Close.

By foot

Head along the Royal Mile to the Lawnmarket section, the museum is signposted through into Lady Stair's Close. The shops on either side of the opening into the close are: Hawick Knitwear (on the left) and Heritage of Scotland (on the right). The museum is signposted from here.

The Museum

- **Please remind your class that the museum is open to everyone and there may be other people using the museum – to be considerate of this.**

It is important to remember that to look after the things in the museum everyone needs to look with their eyes and not with their hands. Please do not touch things whilst in the museum – this will help to look after them so more people can enjoy them.

- **As you enter the museum via the front door (if you are tall please watch your head) there are steps leading you down to your right or up to your left.**

Please note that the steps are irregular, different sizes and shapes. There are frequent areas of low head height and narrow passages. One staircase is extremely narrow and steep – this is one of the staircases leading to the Walter Scott room.

The museum rooms are not large and we would suggest that there should be a maximum of 10 children visiting each room at any given time.

- **We would recommend a teacher pre-visit familiarisation trip.**

We strongly recommend that you have at least 2 adults per 10 children and that a class of 30 should be divided into 3. This should be organised pre-visit.

- **The way that the visit has been structured avoids**

children passing on the stairs. There may be other visitors using the stairs but wait until they have got to where they are going.

- **There are toilets located on the third level of the museum** (from the front door, head up the stairs (there are 25 on the spiral staircase). The toilets are on the left-hand side just off the staircase. There is one male bathroom and one female bathroom.

- **If you want to look at the printing press used for some of Scott's novels, this is located at the top of the stairs and has a narrow viewing area.** Only a maximum of 5 children with an adult at any given time – the others can wait on the sofa on the landing.

- **Assistance dogs only are allowed in this museum.**

- **No food or drink can be consumed in the museum.** If the children need to have a drink or snack – there is a good sized mostly enclosed courtyard directly outside the museum.

- **Please do not lean on the display cases or allow children to draw on the furniture or walls.**

There are seats available to sit on throughout the museum- any which are not meant for sitting on are clearly marked with rope.

Some identified risks specific to the Writers' Museum

Trip and fall hazards

- **There are many irregular and unusual staircases within the museum.** Please encourage children to walk in single file on the widest part of the step, holding on to the handrail.
- **If it has been raining outside there is an increased risk due to wet floors.** Take extra care. Walk and never run in the museum.
- **Changes in flooring type and level.**
- **Low level objects** – could cause people to trip. Take time and be aware of surroundings.

Other hazards

- **Sharp corners on cases** – some may be at head height, take extra care and limit group sizes.

- **Low level lighting for conservation reasons.**
- **Balcony landing - do not allow children to climb or look over the banister.** There is a significant drop.
- **Small staircases and narrow areas throughout the museum** could lead to overcrowding, potential for children bumping into one another.
- **There may be areas in the museum, nooks and crannies, that children could hide in.**
- **Low ceiling height** – taller children and adults could bump heads.
- **Meeting point if there was a fire alarm during your visit is: *The lamp in the middle of the courtyard.***
- **Visitor service assistants will be working in the museum (there are usually 2).** They are available if you should have questions or need guidance whilst visiting the museum.

TRIPS TO THE MUSEUM ARE FREE BUT DONATIONS ARE WELCOME!

The Trail - handy hints and how to use this trail

Before you head to the museum, print out the trail.

- Please staple the trail in the top left corner.

It has been designed as a flip style trail - whilst you look at the page with all the information to guide the trip - the opposite side will have an image for the class to find. If you have a class of 30 you will need at least 3 copies of this trail. When printing, select the option 'Print on the short side'.

- Familiarise yourself with the trail, highlight the parts most relevant to your class.
- The trail has been devised with a cross curricular approach but the main curriculum areas are: Social Studies and Literacy and English.

SOC 1-01a, SOC 1-02a, SOC 1-03a, SOC 1-04a, SOC 1-06a, SOC 2-01a, SOC 2-02a, SOC 2-03a, SOC 2-04a, SOC 2-06a.

LIT 1-02a, LIT 1-04a, LIT 1-05a, LIT 1-07a, LIT 1-08a, LIT 1-09a, LIT1-10a, LIT 2-02a, LIT 2-04a, LIT 2-05a, LIT 2-06a, LIT 2-07a, LIT 2-09a.

ENG 1-03a, ENG 1-25a, ENG 1-30a, ENG 1-31a, ENG 2-03a, ENG 2-31a.

- The trail is designed so that it can be done in any order.
- It will take approximately 1.5hrs.
- We would recommend a teacher pre-visit familiarisation trip.
- We strongly recommend that you have at least 2 adults per 10 children and that a class of 30 should be divided into 3. This should be organised pre-visit.
- The way that the visit has been structured avoids children passing on the stairs.
- There may be other visitors using the stairs but please wait until they have finished.
- To book a trip please call 0131 529 4901 or email museumsandgalleries@edinburgh.gov.uk.

The Trail

- Discover the first part of the trail together or split into 2 smaller groups. This is for the outside part of the trail - looking at the building.
- Heading inside we strongly recommend that you have at least 2 adults per 10 children and that a class of 30 should be divided into 3.
- This should be organised pre-visit.
- Helping adults should be briefed ahead of the trip.
- The Great Hall is the largest space in the museum and groups can cross over in this space safely.

Suggested plan for groups:

Group 1. Robert Louis Stevenson

This group will head downstairs and look at the Robert Louis Stevenson rooms.

Group 2. Robert Burns

This group will head upstairs, going via the Great Hall, bear left going up 3 steps and then turn right - into the Burns rooms.

Group 3. Sir Walter Scott

This group will head up to the Great Hall too, they will look at this room before heading up the small burglar steps, just off the Great Hall (to the left of the room).

Group 1 will then head to the Robert Burns rooms (via the Great Hall).

Group 2 will head to the Walter Scott Rooms (this starts in the Great Hall).

Group 3 head along the landing, down the spiral stairs to the Stevenson rooms.

Group 1 will head to the Walter Scott Rooms (this starts in the Great Hall).

Group 2 head along the landing, down the spiral stairs to Stevenson rooms.

Group 3 will head back up to the Burns Rooms (via the Great Hall).

Things to do before, after or during your visit to the Writers' Museum

- **Read 'My Luv'e's like a Red, Red Rose'** by Robert Burns and illustrated by Ruschi Mhasane.
- **Read poems from A Child's Garden of Verses'** by Robert Louis Stevenson - please see below some examples of poems you could use.
- **Find out some facts about Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.**

Visit:

<http://static.visitscotland.com/pdf/rabbie-for-kids.pdf>

- **Try writing in old style handwriting** like the writers.
- **Write a poem** in the style of Burns or Robert Louis Stevenson.
- **Using some Scots vocabulary**, like the 3 writers in the museum, write your own story.
- **Write a report about your trip** and include some Scots vocabulary.
- **Using information you discovered on your visit create a timeline of the three writers**, be sure to include technological, social and political changes in your timeline (photography would be an obvious one).
- **Make a crest** like the ones you saw outside the museum - what would your family crest look like?
- **Learn a poem by one of the writers** to recite in class or in an assembly.
- **Use a Scots dictionary** to look up words you don't know.
- **Visit the Scott Monument.**

If you want to go into the monument book by calling:

0131 529 4068 or email: museumsandgalleries@edinburgh.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can look at the monument whilst walking through the Princes Street Gardens.

- **If you are planning a whole day visit to Edinburgh** - why not combine visiting the Writers' Museum with one of the other museums or galleries? Take a look at the website: www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk

- **Near to The Writers' Museum are:**

City Art Centre, Museum of Childhood, Museum of Edinburgh, The People's Story Museum, the Scott Monument.

- **There are lunch spaces available** at Museum of Edinburgh and City Art Centre subject to booking and availability.

Please contact the venues directly to book.

Email: museumsandgalleries@edinburgh.gov.uk or call the museums directly:

Museum of Childhood: 0131 529 4142

Scott Monument: 0131 529 4068

Museum of Edinburgh: 0131 529 4143

City Art Centre: 0131 529 3993

The People's Story Museum: 0131 529 4057

Don't forget to share your feedback with us, it is great to see your photographs and any work you may complete back at school. This can be shared either on social media (facebook/ twitter/ Instagram) with the hashtag: **#writers'museumedinburgh** or by emailing: museumsandgalleries@edinburgh.gov.uk

- **Or tweet about your visit** directly on **@EdinCulture**

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Poems from 'A Child's Garden of Verses' by Robert Louis Stevenson

My Shadow

*I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.*

*The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow –
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.*

*He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!*

*One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.*

From a Railway Carriage

*Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.*

*Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;*

*And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!*

The Lamplighter

*My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder her comes posting up the street.*

*Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
Oh Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!*

*For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight!*

To Any Reader

*As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees,
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
Another child, far, far away,
And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear, he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
And it is but a child of air
That lingers in the garden there.*

Checklist

- Camera
- First aid kit
- EV2 forms
- Group lists
- Emergency contact lists
- School contact number
- Wet wipes
- Snack, drinks and lunch (if appropriate)
- Note paper and pencil for group to make notes as they explore the museum
- Clipboards
- And don't forget the camera!

For more fun and to make the trail more interactive you could bring:

Magnifying glasses (to hunt for clues and look more closely at objects in cases).

Kaleidoscopes (look at in Robert Louis Stevenson's rooms when looking at his one in the case).

A copy of 'My Luve's like a Red, Red Rose' by Robert Burns and illustrated by Ruschi Mhasane to read in the Burns rooms.

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Lady Stair's House in context – the bigger picture

How does the house fit into the history of Edinburgh - from 1622 through to today?

In 1622 Lady Stair's House was built in a prestigious and wealthy part of town.

By the 1700s, and the Act of Union, Edinburgh, this small capital city was extremely overcrowded. There were about 30,000 people crammed into tenement dwellings. This enormous overcrowding and lack of available space meant that the Old Town was a filthy and noisy place to live, prone to fires, full of disease and crime. There was even livestock freely wandering around!

This complete lack of space meant that the wealthy and the poor lived together inside the tenement buildings (please see image below). The richer tenants lived in the upper floors, away from the filth and noise of the street. The poor lived at street level - sometimes more than one family lived in one room.

Often there might be a commercial premise at street level and the tenements could be several stories high, making the most out of limited space.

In 1751, a 6-storey tenement collapsed without warning. Buildings collapsing was not unusual in the city but this time it was not a slum building. This building had stood on one of the best streets and housed prestigious Edinburgh people. A survey was conducted and several other buildings were unsafe. These were cleared away and the question of how to solve the problem of lack space was now a desperate one.

But how to develop the city - there were marshlands to the south and to the immediate north was the Nor' Loch.

The Nor' Loch was a body of water that was a dumping ground for sewage and rubbish for the inhabitants of the town. It was a foul, dirty and smelly loch. Could this be one of the reasons that Edinburgh was known as Auld Reekie?

The Lord Provost, George Drummond purchased the north land and decided to build a New Town. He launched a Scotland wide architectural competition to design this New Town.

The winner, much to the surprise of many was a young man called James Craig (he had no formal architectural training!) His plans are on display at Museum of Edinburgh.

The Nor' Loch was drained 1759 (and is now the site of Princes Street Gardens).

North Bridge was built in 1772. And so, the New Town sprang into being.

And what of Lady Stair's House during this time – how did it escape the clearances that were sweeping through the Old Town?

Luckily, the house was saved from clearance when in 1893 Lord Roseberry (and a distant relative of Sir William Gray) bought the house. Lord Roseberry commissioned George Shaw Aitken to restore the building. Restoration saved most of the building but the north, south and west wings were demolished because they were dangerous. The aim was to restore it to the original 1622 appearance. The house you see today is much the same as it was once Shaw had completed the restoration.

In 1907 the house was gifted to the city for use as a museum. It started a museum in 1932, from 1955 until 1957 - some toys and items relating to childhood were displayed in the museum. After this it started to show items with literary connections. In 1993, the name of the museum was changed to 'The Writers' Museum'.

An example of a typical house from the Old Town in Edinburgh



Attic
John Sliders,
journeyman tailor.

Mr. James Bailie,
merchant; wife, children
and servant.

Mr. Thomas Cockburn,
lawyer; wife, children and
maid servant.

Lady Jean Nimmo;
with two servants (only
one pictured).

The Miss Ainslies;
with maid servant.
Another is sweeping the
stairs.

Thomas MacGregor,
porter; wife and baby.